

A CRITIQUE OF ROBERT NOZICK'S TRUTH TRACKING THEORY

Benedict Michael PhD

&

Solomon Sonnen Teghtegh

Department of Philosophy

Benue State University, Makurdi

benmike3@gmail.com; mshamijah@bsum.edu.ng

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.34138.62405

Abstract

The study is a critique of Robert Nozick's response to Edmond Gettier's problem. Gettier had in his work entitled "Is Justified Truth Belief Knowledge?" contend that these conditions considered by Plato to be necessary and sufficient criteria for knowledge claims fails to prove certainty of knowledge. Using three examples, Gettier was able to show that the three conditions are not enough and that there is a need for a fourth condition. In response, Robert Nozick propounded his "Truth Tracking" as a solution to the problem. Using the method of critical analysis, the study examines Nozick's argument in his truth tracking theory and discovers that Nozick's theory failed to provide the fourth condition and also could not adequately substantiate his theory as an adequate basis for the justification of our knowledge claim. To guide our discussion, the paper examines Nozick epistemology and his truth tracking theory. The study concludes by showing that Nozick's "Truth Tracking" is another theory of truth rather than the basis for the justification our knowledge claim.

Introduction

Epistemology is one of the major branches of philosophy. As a branch, it is concerned with the inquiry into nature, sources, conditions and validity of human knowledge. Epistemology is aimed at answering questions about what knowledge entails, how knowledge be acquired, to what extent can human knowledge be said to be valid, and what is the limit of human knowledge if any? How can we justify our claims to knowledge these constitute major questions epistemology seeks to answer as a branch of philosophy? To answer these questions, epistemologists over the years have propounded myriads of theories. While this study does not seek to regurgitate these theories, it seeks to show the problematic that has been generated on the question how can we justify our knowledge claims? The response to this question, generated several theories, one

of such theory is Rene Descartes' Foundationalist theory published in his *Meditations*. This theory generally holds that there are some basic beliefs which are self-justifying and can justify other beliefs, other theories include Coherenticism and Contextualism.

The problem of epistemic justification is not in isolation, it emanated from the propositional definition of knowledge which defines knowledge as Justified Truth Belief (JTB). This definition historically is traceable Plato, who viewed truth as the necessary condition for knowledge, Plato conceived of truth as necessary hence knowing must accompany truth, because one cannot know that which is not true, though certainly many things may be truth but we do not know. To him truth condition is necessary for knowledge acquisition because a commitment to its necessity is built into our use of the term knowledge as well as into our thinking about knowledge (Williams James 28). And that along truth we must have sufficient belief about what we claim and because we have a strong belief about the truth of our knowledge claim we should be able to justify our claims, that is, one cannot know something when it is false, one can only have a false belief about such things. These three conditions according to Plato are necessary and sufficient for our knowledge claims. This can be demonstrated thus:

A knows P; if

- (a) that the statement P is true,
- (b) that A believes that P is true,
- (c) that A has adequate grounds for believing P.

However, with the failure of all theories justification Edmund Gettier, using three counter examples to show that Plato's three conditions is not enough for knowledge claims. In his 1963 paper titled "is justified true belief knowledge?". Gettier argued that the three conditions are not adequate that there is a need for a 4th condition. According to Gettier it is possible to make a mistake as knowledge a true belief whose justification is based on epistemic guess or luck rather than sufficient reasons or good evidence. He maintained that if justified true belief analysis is to rule out all possible cases of epistemic luck, it needs to be modified with a forth condition ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gettier problem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gettier_problem)). In essence, Gettier was of the view that, justified true belief alone is not capable in its sufficiency for accounting for our knowledge claims hence our justification for believing a particular thing might be false as such cannot be regarded as the case of knowledge. From his argument if the forth condition is

propounded it will address the cases of epistemic luck or coincidence and guess luck in the field of epistemology.

Gettier however, was unable to provide the 4th condition. Epistemologist such as Kath Laher, Alvin Goldman and Robert Nozick propounded various theories either to provide the 4th conditions or rescue propositional account for knowledge. These theories were merged into two perspectives the evidential and non-evidential theories of knowledge both targeted at bringing solution to the problem raised by Gettier on JTB. Propelled by the failure of the above theories, Robert Nozick propounded “Truth Tracking” in which he argued that knowledge is a relation between the subject and the environment. And that such relations must necessarily correlate to truth hence all analysis of knowledge ought to be found on truth. This study will however show that Robert Nozick’s “Truth Tracking” rather than solving Gettier’s problem and providing the basis of the justification of our knowledge claim. Rather ended up propounding a theory of truth.

The paper apart from the introduction is divided into three parts, the first examines the first examine his idea of epistemology, the second looks at his Truth Tracking Theory, the third looks at criticism and conclusion

Nozick’s Conception of Epistemology

Nozick’s epistemology is deeply steeped in the pragmatic tradition, likewise his imprints are also enormous, his contribution in the theory of knowledge remains highly significant as it borders on strategic epistemological issues which have been puzzling the philosophical enterprise over time. Nozick’s interest in the theory of knowledge lies in skepticism as well as his response to Gettier’s problem. Nozick in his attempt at resolving epistemological problems of skepticism and Gettier’s problem at the metaphysical approach of examining the problem of free will in referring to the problem of knowledge. He contends that the theory of knowledge that follows was not developed in order to explain how knowledge is possible. Rather, the motivation was external to epistemology; only after the account of knowledge was developed for another purpose did I notice its consequence for skepticism, for understanding how knowledge is possible. My original aim was to make progress on the topic of free will (Nozick 170).

Propelled by the desire to demonstrate that the causal determination of action threatens responsibility and is undesirable, Nozick adopted a new mode of philosophy. He argues that there is a second mode of philosophy which is not

directed to arguments and proofs but rather seeks explanation to various philosophical things to render than more coherent and better understanding; and it is this form of philosophy that he adopted to drive home his demand.

Nozick dwelt on how possible it is for us to know anything given the fact enumerated by the skeptic, for example that it is logically possible we are dreaming or floating in a tank with our brain being stimulated to give us exactly our current experiences and even all our past ones. The skeptic therefore is of the position that we do not know what we think we do. This position of the skeptic in Nozick's evaluation, at least leaves us confused, if not converted. But he acknowledged the skeptic's possibilities as being logically coherent and in tension with the existence of (almost all) knowledge. Notwithstanding the logical cohesibility of the skeptical possibility and the tension it poses to the existence of almost all knowledge, Nozick sought a hypothesis to explain how even given the skeptic's possibilities, knowledge is possible. He designed the hypotheses in such a way that they reconcile our belief that we know things with our belief that the skeptical possibilities are logical possibilities (167).

Nozick held that the skeptical possibilities and the threats they pose to our knowledge, depend on our knowing things mediatory through or by way of something else. For him, our thinking or believing that some fact P holds is connected somehow to the fact that P, but is not itself identical with that fact. He noted, intermediate links establish the connection. Such condition leaves room for the possibility of these intermediate stages holding and producing our belief that P, without the fact that P, being at the other end. The intermediate stages arise in a completely different manner one not involving the fact that P holds true (168).

Essentially, Nozick postulated that in knowledge a belief is linked somehow to the fact believed, without this linkage there may be true belief but there will not be knowledge. He maintained that Plato first made the point that knowledge is not simply a belief that is true; if someone knowing nothing about the matter separately tells you and me contradictory things getting one of us to believe P while the other believes $\neg P$, although one of us will have a belief that happens to be true neither of us will have knowledge: Something more is needed for a person S to know that P, to go alongside

- (i) P is true
- (ii) S believes P.

This something more I think is not simply an additional fact but a way that i and ii are linked. Thus consider the traditional third condition stemming from Plato's account: S is justified in believing that P, or S has adequate evidence that P. here a two-part linkage connects S's belief that P with the fact that P and the evidence and the link between the evidence and the belief that P (170).

Nozick Truth Tracking Theory

The starting point of Nozick theory was the reenactment of the original position, according to him, for there to be knowledge the following conditions must be in place: .

P must be true. (Condition 1)

P must be believed (someone must believe *P*). (Condition 2)

If *p* were not true, one would not believe that *p*, via method *M*. (condition 3)

If *p* were true, even in changed circumstance, one would still believe that *p*, via method *M* (condition 4) (Nozick 179).

Condition 1 and 2 are the conditions that are reflected in Plato's JTB (Justified True Belief). However, in joining condition 1 and 2 in his theory means Nozick discovered Plato's argument as true about knowledge and consider Gettier's case as an eye-opener to the fact that we need a strong case for JTB since it is easy for someone to falsify or manipulate JTB. It is in regards to Gettier's case that Nozick involve conditions 3 and 4 in order to eradicate situations that would come up with a true belief that is justified but which rests on a false assumption or claims. So his (Nozick) first three conditions, are alike to Plato's understanding of knowledge but the three conditions in themselves are insufficient to guarantee one's knowledge because of the condition which state thus: If *p* were true, even in changed circumstance, one would still believe that *p*, via method *M* (condition 4). This condition protects and prevent any guess or luck because the knower or subject can only believe a proposition if it were true, he would believe it and if it were false he cannot believe it (176). It is important to understand that conditions 1 and 2 are factual in nature meanwhile 3 and 4 are subjunctive conditionals that carries Nozick counterfactual analysis of truth. Nozick's argument from counterfactual analysis means truth cannot only be limited to mere facts.

In his analysis it is assumed that conditions 3 and 4 that are conditional statements, are meant to assist a knower (agent) track truth. The two conditions

ensure connectivity between the knower to his environment such that if something were not the case then he would not believe it, and if it were, he would believe it. In the failure of conditions 1, 2 and 3 to prove objectives of skepticism wrong Nozick strongly believe that with condition 4 skeptical position that 'no knowledge is possible' can be destroyed. And the condition 4 will also assist in proving wrong Gettier's doubt on the conditions of knowledge. Through condition 4 we cannot just track truth in an ordinary sense but also truth of skeptical assumptions (198-9). We can see in condition 3 that the subject's belief condition is sensitive to the falsity of the "dream case of skeptics" proposal but not how it is sensitive to its truth. That is the skeptics claim that if it were not the case that one is dreaming, he would not believe that he is dreaming.

Robert Nozick supposed that the truth tracking theory must be able to track truth even if the conditions that warrant one's belief on a particular object changes. However, the third condition in JTB cannot track truth in changed situations or conditions. Hence the truth of condition three (3) was a posteriori. Nozick also adopted a priori truth so that he can achieve his target. The truth of a posteriori in Nozick's work, can be seen as contingent truth in Leibniz' conception of truth. Also, he adopted a priori truth to aid a posteriori truth in tracking truth which is necessary truth in Leibnizian conception. According to Leibniz, truths of fact or contingent truths deal specifically with the *actual* world, and the matters of contingent existence. Meanwhile, the 'necessary truths are truths of reason and to him their opposite is impossible, meanwhile 'the truths of fact' are contingent and their opposite is possible. In other words, necessary truths are those that can be demonstrated through an analysis of terms or propositions, so that in the end they become identities (Leibniz 217). Nozick on the other hand, knowledge of necessary truth does not require condition three (3), hence the condition three (3) gives a possibility of a proposition being false but a necessary truth cannot be falsified. It is, therefore, impossible to falsely believe a necessary truth. However, both contingent truth and necessary truth can give us knowledge hence the right method is applied. In his position, when contingent truth fails to grant us knowledge, necessary truth will definitely do.

To prove Nozick's position let us consider a logical truth table which demonstrates that, the two subjunctive conditionals (conditions 3 and 4) introduce a better connection between the antecedent p and consequent q . However, it is important to understand that the subjunctive conditional "if p were true, then q would be true" does not state that whenever the antecedent p is true then it follows the consequent q is also true. It only says that in a possible

situation that p is true, then q would also be true. Indeed, this does not mean that p entails q , or if p then q follows, or that if p is present then q must be present.

P	Q	$P \rightarrow Q$
T	T	T
T	F	F
F	T	T
F	F	T

Let us also consider another example from a truth table whereby, if the antecedent p entails q , then it means that every scenario in which p is true is a situation in which q is also true. But in the table subjunctive conditional only states q would hold if p were true, and not as if q must hold whenever p is true, or that it is logically impossible that p yet *not-q* (p and $\sim q$),. The below truth table therefore indicates that the conditional is only truth-functional in the second line when the antecedent is true and the consequent is false. In other words, is conjunction of antecedent and denial of consequent.

P	P	$P \rightarrow Q$
T	T	?
T	F	F
F	T	?
F	F	?

The proposed conditions 3 and 4 by Nozick defined a clear-cut method, whereby truth-tracking externalized the idea of justification. Borrowing from Dretske, Nozick meant that one is justified in holding a belief if he acquires it by the most reliable and appropriate method. Justification in this sense means application of a better method than any other available, and this is the most competent way of attaining scientific beliefs. For him, what therefore counts is that his method is more reliable than other methods (Nozick 265).

However, it is understood that condition four (4) is enough for the tracking and for knowledge when there is true belief, even if condition 3 (three) does not apply. It could be recalled that the root notion of knowledge revealed so far is one whereby not only does a person truly believe that P but he would truly believe that P , and would not falsely believe that P . when P is a necessary truth, this last part drops away, we need not worry about his falsely believing that P ,

since P cannot be false. With contingent truth as earlier stated it is not enough that the person would truly believe it. For instance, when some $\text{not} \rightarrow P$ world could easily be the case, if the person would believe P even then he does not actually know that P ; he would or might falsely believe that P . moreover, it is clear why we cannot merely require condition 4 in the case where P is contingently true: 4 alone does not show the person wouldn't or might not falsely believe that P (Nozick 188).

With the notion of tracking one comes to belief that p , Nozick in that regards add value to epistemological claims, even outside attempting answer to the question of truth and falsity he also addressed the question of belief forming processes. In as much as the question of truth and falsity is normative therefore logical, meanwhile the quest for reliable belief forming methods is prescriptive in nature and therefore psychological. Meanwhile, the truth of a hypothesis according to the tracking principle thus requires that the subjunctives or their probabilistic variants hold as true. It is also pertinent to know that, condition 3 has come to be known as Sensitivity hence it explains the failures to know in Gettier's cases, cases of lucky guesses, and cases of wishful thinking. Condition 4 in other words captures another dimension of the non-accidentality of knowledge.

Tracking Knowledge of Necessary Truth

Nozick contend that tracking knowledge requires necessary truth, but that one must mention mathematical truth, hence plausibly, theories of knowledge stumble over mathematical truth. Mathematical truths are said to be necessary truth. However, Nozick's condition 3 of tracking, account for the person who would believe if P were false, but in the case of mathematical truths P , this necessarily false supposition which is impossible one. According to Nozick's explanation, when p is necessarily true, the antecedent of condition 3 is necessarily false. However where condition 3 does not come into play for necessary truth p , the account of tracking for these propositions, when truly believed reduces to 4 which state that, "if P were true and S were to use method M to arrive at belief whether P , then S would believe, via M , that P (Nozick 186)

Now, if M is the method of making one to believe something on the basis of a mathematical proof, then, since this method guarantees truth, it is P that will be believed and so 4 is satisfied. The satisfaction of 4 is not from any dogmatic method of believing what one has been told by his parents, in the case of necessary truth P , although P will be true in all close situations or words.

However if there are close worlds in which ones parents told him not-P, then such method can lead to false belief in those worlds, so it is not actually true of him that he would believe the truth by such method. Though it is not enough for the dogmatist to firmly believe something, hence he must come to believe in a way that not only does but would yield a true belief. Most of the mathematical statements are believed not based on the proof of authority or “hearsay” we have been told that they are true. Though, the fundamental question here is whether the method (M of condition 4) can track truth or not.

Arguing from the foregoing, the condition 4 in the case of necessary truth is sufficient for tracking and accounting for knowledge whenever there is true belief in spite the non-applicability of condition 3. Here the question that comes to someone’s mind is, if 4 without 3 is enough or sufficient in tracking or accounting for knowledge then why not make 4 along with 1-2 to form the account of tracking for other cases too? Why condition 3 is needed even in cases, for these cases where it is able to apply, if 4 alone is sufficient where 3 cannot be applied? Why not simply say that for any true statement P a person knows that P when: if P were true he would believe it. In spite all the questions, Nozick argued that the root of knowledge he revealed or uncovered is one where not only does a person truly believe that p, but he would truly believe that p, and he would not falsely believe that P. whenever truth is a necessary truth, the last part of the argument is useless and as one need not to be worried about falsely believing that p hence P can not necessarily be false. Also it is not enough that the person would truly believe it in regards to contingent truth. Indeed, it is clear to understand why one cannot merely require. Condition 4 alone does not show the person would not or might not falsely believe that P (Nozick 188).

Moreover, like Gettier’s cases in the foregone where Smith believe his friend owns a Ford, neither of the two conditions for tracking was satisfied, and therefore does not account or record as knowledge according to the truth tracking theory of knowledge. His examples involve inferring a truth from a falsehood or justified believe. Nozick’s argument here is that the necessary truth does not involve inference from any proposition of any kind, and that fourth condition is only a condition that can track the necessary truth. Condition 3 without mention of method excludes many of these cases, there may seem to be other cases of non-knowledge apart from Gettier’s cases that often satisfy condition 3 because the one would not have been led to have the false belief Q from which he infers P, unless P were true. It is in regards to thisthat, Gilbert

Harman formulated a requirement that “the lemmans be true” to rule out such inferences from falsehood (189).

Nozick on the other hand present his theory to yield same result that Gilbert proposed. For him (Nozick) account seek to yield result by treating infers it from Q is false, the person uses to arrive at his belief that P. If Q is false, the person using this method will not satisfy condition 3; for when p were false and the person arrive at his belief about the truth value of p by inference from q, he still would believe P. He, therefore, does not know P unless he also uses some other method M1 satisfying 3 and 4 that outweighs the defective ones. Some of the counterexamples or Gettier’s cases involve situations where even though the method does not satisfy condition 3, if P were false the person would not be using that method and so would not be believing P. it might seemed that 3 is satisfied but using the method of truth tracking it does not.

Tracking Truth by using appropriate conditions

Nozick's theory of knowledge vitiates the idea that knowledge stands in a tracking relation to the world. In particular, Nozick is interested in explaining how merely true beliefs could have given rise to knowledge in a changing world. To address the issue, he proposes the following thought experiment: Imagine yourself in the position of God wanting to create organisms who would have true beliefs in a diverse and changing world. The ways to accomplish this are to (a) constantly intervene: start them with true beliefs and intervene to change their beliefs each time the world changes; (b) determine what the whole future will be, and create each being with a preprogrammed sequence of beliefs to fit his changing situation in a pre-established harmony; (c) create beings able to detect changes in facts who will change their beliefs accordingly (Nozick 283-4).

Nozick finds (c) what he calls “the evolutionary process” the most plausible hypothesis which is certainly the one that best reflects our world, and goes on speculating how the adaptive advantages of being endowed with such belief capabilities could have made knowledge possible. Nozick’s core idea is that it would be a too demanding condition on knowledge to require covariation with the truth in every or any possible situation. Instead, knowledge covaries with the truth in the range of variation of situations of the environment we are adapted to. Nozick’s reasoning can be reconstructed as follows: (1) insofar as we are adapted to the environment we inhabit, E, we achieve a high ratio of true to false beliefs by tracking the truth in the range of variation of situations of E; (2) Thanks to

such reliable belief capabilities, we manage to acquire knowledge in E; (3) Covariation with the truth in situations beyond that range would not increase our ratio of true to false beliefs in E. Therefore, covariation with the truth in situations beyond that range is not necessary for acquiring knowledge in E.

He strongly argued that our evolutionarily-shaped belief capabilities track the truth across a range of possible situations is certainly not misguided, but after more than many years of philosophical explanations it is still unclear how to delimit the specific set of possibilities in which this is supposed to happen. Perhaps the problem lies in the assumption that ‘known beliefs directly covary with the truth’ of what is believed in certain possible worlds. An alternative approach to the modal dimension of knowledge and specifically to the idea that knowledge stands in a tracking relation to the world has it that our belief capabilities track the truth, not by directly preserving conformity between what is believed and what is the case in a range of varying scenarios, but by tracking, whether the conditions for belief formation are appropriate in those scenarios so that ‘truth can be indirectly tracked by ensuring that the relevant belief-forming methods are only used in conditions that make it likely that conformity is preserved between what is believed and what is the case.

This evolutionary motivation for his own view can be easily revised to back up this alternative view. The core idea would be the following: In the same way as in Nozick’s original story the relevant evolutionary process does not bestow upon organisms a capability for true beliefs so powerful that in no logically possible situation would their beliefs be mistaken; in the revamped story the bestowed capability is not so powerful that in no logically possible situation would their conditions for belief formation be inappropriate. After all, organisms with such powerful god-like capacities for tracking appropriate conditions across all possible worlds would exhibit no better appropriateness-tracking skills relative to a specific environment than organisms only adapted to track appropriateness in that environment.

Moreover, a further restriction applies, in order to acquire knowledge, it is not required that organisms track all the conditions for belief formation in a specific environment, but only some of them. To see this, note that there is an ambiguity in the very notion of appropriate conditions for belief formation: it may either mean conditions that are appropriate for forming beliefs or conditions that are appropriate for forming beliefs that, so to speak, end up hitting the truth. Accordingly, we can make a distinction between two types of conditions for belief formation: conditions that merely enable one to form beliefs that is

‘enabling conditions’ and conditions that determine whether one’s beliefs end up being correct or incorrect which is ‘determining conditions’.

Crucially, knowledge does not require tracking the appropriateness of the former. By way of illustration, the presence of oxygen enables one’s cognitive processes to produce beliefs, but this does not mean that one needs to track this fact in order to acquire knowledge via such cognitive processes. By contrast, factors such as the size, shape, colour or distance of an object determine whether one’s visual beliefs about that object will be correct or incorrect. When such factors are appropriate for one’s reliable visual capacities, one will likely end up forming beliefs that are true. Unsurprisingly, the appropriateness or inappropriateness of these factors is what one needs to track in order to acquire knowledge.

However, it is important to note that, the notion of appropriateness of conditions for belief formation is inherently tied to the notion of reliability, insofar as the later is typically defined as a tendency or disposition to produce a sufficiently high ratio of true to false beliefs in certain appropriate or normal conditions. Appropriate conditions for reliability usually correspond to conditions shaped by evolution and to learning conditions, i.e., the conditions under which agents learn to use the method in the first place, e.g., amateur art lovers learn how to tell a painting by Picasso from a painting by Kandinsky but they do not typically learn how to tell whether a painting is a forgery; the presence of forgeries thus makes their circumstances inappropriate for their ability to recognize painters.

Problems Associated with the Truth Tracking Theory

From the above we will observe that Nozick believes truth-tracking takes care of both necessary truths and contingent truths, which thus expresses a unified analysis of knowledge. To him, the conditions 3 and solved the long standing problem of justification in knowledge. there were several reactions to Nozick’s theory, such scholars like Duncan Pritchard.

Duncan Pritchard for instance, contends that while it is true that knowledge and justification cannot be based on luck and coincidence, also agrees with Nozick’s sensitivity condition (that is condition 3) deals with Gettier counter-examples, he however dis agreed with Nozick on the grounds that the sensitive condition does not always accommodate the anti-luck principle. Duncan Pritchard’s conception of anti-luck is counterfactual just like Nozick who also consider events to be non-lucky if they obtain not only in the actual situation, but also in close possible

situations or worlds. In the case whereby the event obtained in the possible world but fails to obtain in close possible world then it is lucky based (209). However, to consider knowledge anti-luck and for the failure of the truth tracking to accommodate anti-luck cases has shown that truth tracking does not in any way account for knowledge.

In the words of Duncan Pritchard, the reason why sensitivity in condition 3 is unable to account for the knowledge is that it focuses on the closest not- p world and ignores the wide range of close worlds where the agent believes the target proposition and believes truly. This is one of the main reasons why many in the literature opt for the thesis that knowledge demands not sensitive belief but rather *safe* belief. The basic idea behind safety is that one has a true belief which could not have easily been false. This is usually cashed-out as the claim that one has a true belief that p such that, in close possible worlds, if one continues to form a belief on the same basis as in the actual world, then one's belief continues to be true (156). However, the challenge is that of establishing truth conditions in Nozick's subjunctive conditional, if p were true, q would be true. In Nozick argument, the conditional "if p were true, q would be true" is true, if and only if, in every possible situation in which p is true, q would be true. Nozick failed to tell us in his analysis the condition of truth in the subjunctive conditional, though he only explain when the condition can be true.

In the same line C. Wright rejects Nozick's claim to have been able overcome the sceptical argument by introducing non-closure. He argued that Nozick's standard p and q (p = 'I have a hand'; q = \neg BIV produces a problem for the $\neg q$ scenario. Here, BIV (Brain in a Vat') is true and so p is false. We can assume that BIV (Brain in a Vat) is one of the relevant $\neg p$ scenarios to be considered in assessing whether Kap (Skeptical closure or principle). But if so, then subject a fails condition (3) because, even though p is false, Bap (if B is the case then P).

So Wright argues that Nozick must assume that BIV (Brain in a Vat') is not one of the relevant $\neg p$ scenarios. And he further argued that following which (i) represents 'had it not been the case that I have a hand, then it would still not have been the case that BIV' (Brain in a Vat').

- (i) $\neg P \rightarrow Q$
- (ii) $\neg q \rightarrow \neg p$
- (iii) $\neg q \rightarrow q$

(ii) is simply the statement that in BIV (Brain in a Vat'), I do not have a hand and then the reduction (iii) follows by modus ponens from (i) and (ii). As Wright

points out, this could be seen as a refutation of the skeptic, but that line is not open to Nozick who wishes to agree that (Brain in a Vat') BIV is logically possible (C Wright 134-140).

A close analysis of Nozick's truth tracking theory fails to demonstrated clearly the foundations to which the theory is built upon. Failure to understand the conditions for tracking the truth then one cannot have the knowledge of truth in spite the fact that our belief can track truth. Drawing from what he presented, it means that we know what is being tracked. In the real sense this discussion, if one does not know the conditions of truth, he wouldn't know truth when he encountered it. However, the fundamental question is that how possible would one's belief track that unknown? Hence it will be incompatible and insufficient to uphold that truth tracking is workable without known conditions of truth. It would be difficult to sustain the claim that one's beliefs can track something whose conditions are unknown to him. This has been one of the major challenges of the truth tracking theory of knowledge.

In our attempt to evaluate the extent to which the truth-tracking theory of Robert Nozick be said to be adequate in solving the Gettier's problem and at the same time serve as an adequate theory of justification in epistemology has shown that, Nozick truth tracking theory, fall short of what it was aimed at achieving. However, Nozick did not precisely outline truth conditions for tracking knowledge of any proposition, hence without having knowledge of or known "truth conditions for tracking", his truth-tracking theory therefore failed to convene the task of epistemic justification because one could not have proofs or indicators of which is tracked. He should have indicated clear truth conditions rather than propounding conditions for tracking which are also termed tracking conditions. If we admit that our beliefs can track truth without the conditions of truth being known to us, then we would be arguing to the conclusion that our beliefs can track both knowledge and error. Also, we would not be able to differentiate knowledge and error, hence such a distinction would require that we at least know what truth is like or be. Indeed, Robert Nozick formulated his theory on the assumptions that there is truth, but fails to demonstrate the basis of such assumption that there exists truth.

Also, if there is no proper knowledge of how truth and belief can be merged as the tracking theory claims, then, truth and beliefs are separate entities that cannot be merge together by whatever means. As seen in the theory cannot track the truth of skeptical assumptions or hypothesis, since Nozick condition 4 was propounded to ensure that a knower's belief tracks the truth of skeptic

hypotheses. Therefore, Nozick claims and intentions toward establishing the tracking theory as an alternative theory to solve the definitional problem of knowledge has fails, hence he rather propounded a theory of truth. On the whole it can be argued that in spite of the short-comings of Nozick tracking theory of truth, theory of truth tracking proved a point here that inferring or entailment in the case of knowledge can only lead to false-hood. Hence, truth tracking ensured or yield a positive result when it demonstrates that the skeptical closure is wrong. In this way, skeptics cannot deny the fact that knowledge involves variation. And also shows that skeptical argument is a contradiction for any denier of variation, thus, one part of the argument shows that knowledge involves variation and the other presupposes that knowledge does not involve any form of variation. Meanwhile, the part that denies variation is the one that depend on knowledge being close under known logical implication.

Conclusion

In this paper we examined JTB through Gettier's critique. We also looked at Plato's view knowledge as justified truth belief, whereby knowledge cannot escape the scope of JTB. This analysis was seen plausible from different centuries but Gettier came up with critique upon it which he argued as unveiled above that, JTB is capable of accommodating false-hood and guess luck. We see that Gettier thought knowledge should be free from guess luck and therefore argued that for JTB to accommodate knowledge it need to rule out guess luck. He advocated for a fourth condition.

We also argued Robert Nozick truth tracking theory was propounded to solve the Gettier problem. Our study discover truth tracking is such that if one has a tendency to believe something when it is true, and not believe it when it's false, then one knows it. According to him, conditions 3 and 4 are subjunctive conditionals that state what would happen in circumstances different from the actual ones. And that condition 3 and 4 are meant for tracking truth. Condition 3 he believes is a sensitive condition while condition 4 is meant to establish or track skeptical hypothesis thereby showing that skepticism is wrong.

The study also discovers that theory does not disclose to us the conditions of truth that would enable its tracking. And that it is possible for it to be tracking error, since without the conditions of truth, one would not know what truth itself is if he or she came across it. The truth tracking theories as the study observed if properly stated would have serve as a distinction between Nozick theory and

other theories of justification. It is clear that Nozick's tracking theory fails to achieve its setup goals but rather serve as another theory of truth. To achieve its set goal, the theory would have considered truth confirming elements as basis for justification.

References

- Christopher Wright. *Keeping Track of Nozick, Analysis*, Vol. 43, No. 3 Jun., 1983
- Dretske Fred. "Conclusive Reasons" in *Australian Journal of Philosophy*, vol.49. 1971.
- Duncan Pritchard, *Anti-Luck Epistemology*, Synthese, Vol. 158, No 3 (Oct. 2007).
- Herbert Keuth, "Tarski's Definition of Truth and the Correspondence Theory," *Philosophy of Science*. 1978.
- Nozick, Robert. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. New York: Basic Books, 1974.
- Nozick, Robert. *Philosophical Explanations*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1981.
- Nozick, Robert. *Invariances: The Structure of the objective world*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Russell Bertrand. "Truth and Falsehood" in *The nature of Truth; Classical and Contemporary Perspective*. Edited by Michael P. Lynch. London: The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2001.
- William James. "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth" in *Works of William James, Pragmatism*. Edited by, Fredson Bowers and Ignas Skrupskelis. Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1975.
- Leibniz, G. W. *Philosophical Essays*. Eds. and trans by Ariew, Roger, and Daniel Garber, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989.